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From the Nashville Patriot.

Letter from G. W. Brownlow—His Treatment.

KNOXVILLE JAIL, Dec. 29 1861.

Editors of the Nashville "Patriot."

In your issue of the 17th inst., you say:—"We learn that W. G. Brownlow, imprisoned at Knoxville, refuses to eat anything, desiring to starve himself to death."

I have no doubt, Mr. Editor, that you have learned such a thing but it is wonderful intelligence! And but for the fact that I do not wish to be understood as trying to commit suicide, I would not care to correct the erroneous statement. The truth in my case is, that I have now been in jail two weeks, and I have eaten too much, every day my family, with the permission of Brigadier General Carroll furnishing me with three meals each day. But for taking cold and suffering from a sore throat, I could boast of usual health. As it is, I claim to be the most cheerful of more than one hundred prisoners I found here, on my arrival.

But, sir, I will give you an additional item or so, which many of your readers will peruse with interest, if you are allowed to publish them. I left home about the 5th of November with a view of collecting some claims due my of fine for advertising, and to relieve the fears of my family, who were daily annoyed with the calls of drunken soldiers, calling before my house and flourishing their side knives and pistols, and making threats of violence. The last week in November I received a letter from Brigadier General Carroll, inviting me to return and promising me protection from personal violence. On the 5th of December I received a brief letter from Major General Crittenden, inviting me to his headquarters in Knoxville, promising me passports into Kentucky, and a military escort to conduct me safe. At that time I was furnished with a copy of a letter to the Major General from J. P. Benjamin, Secretary of War, advising him to give me passports and a safe conduct beyond the Confederate lines.

Supposing the head of the War Department, and the Major General commanding here, to be acting in good faith, I reported myself in person, and accepted the offer of passports. I agreed to start on Saturday, and the General designated Captain Gillespie, a company of cavalry to serve him as an escort.

But, on Friday evening, just before sundown I was arrested for treason, founded on certain editorials in the Knoxville Whig, since June last, the warrant being signed by Commissioner Reynolds and Attorney Ramsey. I am, therefore, in jail—in close confinement—perfectly contented and making no complaints against any one. I am waiting patiently to see which is the highest power, the War Department at Richmond, associated with the Major General in command here, or the Commissioners Court for Knoxville! Nay, I am anxious to know whether the high authorities inviting me here were acting in good faith, or were only playing a trick to have me incarcerated! I am not willing to believe that the representatives of a great government, struggling for its independence, and having in charge the interests of twelve millions of people, intend to act in bad faith to me. The chivalrous people of the South, and all the journals have denounced the high handed measures of the United States Government in suspending the habeas corpus act, suppressing public journals, and incarcerating citizens upon letters cachet, and I will not believe my self to believe that the Confederate Government will resort to similar tricks!

I am, sir,
Very respectfully, &c.,
W. G. BROWNLOW.

(From the Knoxville Register of the 28th instant.)
A sequel to the above.

Yesterday evening at 8 o'clock, Judge Reynolds ordered a session of his Court at the Court House. A few unimportant cases were before him for his consideration, all of which were properly disposed of. The Deputy Marshal Fox having been ordered to bring from jail W. G. Brownlow, reported that B. was too unwell, as he represented himself to appear at the Court House. Very few spectators were present. The Commissioner ordered the District Attorney to proceed—whereupon the District Attorney arose and read the following letter which he had just received from Mr. Benjamin, Secretary of War, at Richmond:

Confederate States of America,
War Department.
Richmond, Dec. 28, 1861.

Sir:—Your letters of the 17th and 19th inst. have been received. In relation to Brownlow's case, the facts are simply these. Brownlow being concealed somewhere in the mountains, made application to Gen. Crittenden for protection against what he called a military mob or military tribunal if he came to Knoxville, professing his willingness to undergo a civil trial i. e. a trial before the civil Court, as distinguished from Court Martial, and as I understand General Crittenden promised to protect him from any violence and from any trial before a Military tribunal.

In the meantime, Mr. Baxter came here and represented that Brownlow, who was entirely beyond our power, and so concealed that no one could get possession of his person, was willing to leave the country and go into exile to avoid any further trouble in East Tennessee, and proffered that Brownlow would come in and deliver himself up to be conveyed out of East Tennessee, if the Government would agree to let him do so, and to protect him in his exit.

If Brownlow had been in our hands we might not have accepted this proposition; but deeming better to have him an open enemy on the other side of the line than a secret enemy within the lines, authority was given to Gen. Crittenden to assure him of protection across the border if he came in to Knoxville.

It was not in our power, nor that of any one else, to prevent his being taken by process of law, and I confess it did not occur to me that any attempt would be made to take him out of the hands of the military authority. This has been done, however, and it is only regretted in one point of view; that is, color has been given to the suspicion that Brownlow has been entrapped and has given himself up under the promise of protection which has not been firmly kept. Gen. Crittenden feels sensitive on this point, and I share his feeling. Better that any, the most dangerous enemy, however criminal should escape, than that the honor and good faith of the Government should be impugned, or even suspected. Gen. Crittenden gave his word only that Brownlow should not be tried by court martial, and I gave authority to promise him protection if he would surrender, to be conveyed across the border. We have both kept our words, as far as was in our power, but every one must see that Brownlow would now be safe, and at large, if he had not supposed that his reliance on promises made him would ensure his safe departure from East Tennessee.

Under all the circumstances, therefore, if Brownlow is exposed to harm from his arrest I shall deem the honor of the Government so far compromised as to consider it my duty to urge on the President a pardon for any offense of which he may be found guilty, and I repeat the expression of my regret that he was prosecuted however evident may be his guilt.

J. P. BENJAMIN,
Secretary of War.

J. C. Ramsey, Esq.
C. S. Dist. Attorney Knoxville.

Upon the reading of the foregoing letter, the Attorney remarked that the arrest of Brownlow had been made after consultation with the military authorities, who had given assurance that if Brownlow should be arrested by civil process that the military would in no way interfere in his behalf except to protect him from personal violence that his arrest had been made because of the following and similar articles that had been published in Brownlow's paper:

"Let the Railroads on which Union citizens of East Tennessee are conveyed to Montgomery in irons, be eternally and hopelessly destroyed! Let the property of the men concerned be consumed, and let their lives pay the forfeit, and the names will be given."

District Attorney Ramsey then proceeded to say that he would enter a *nolle prosequi* only upon the ground that the good faith of the Confederate Government should be carried out in this case, and Brownlow be transported beyond our lines. This he did that no imputation whatever should be made against the authorities at Richmond of bad faith, no matter what might be the circumstances which led the authorities to such a conclusion. For himself, he believed that Brownlow could have been arrested, but as a different impression prevailed at Richmond, and the authorities acted

upon that, from the information they had, he could not do otherwise than enter a *nolle prosequi*.

Judge Reynolds having heard the letter to the Secretary of War remarked that, under the circumstances, he could not hesitate as to the discharge of Brownlow, and so ordered.

Whether Brownlow was well enough to leave the jail last night, or what has become of him, we have not learned, though we understand it was the intention of the commander of the post here to hold him under arrest with a view to his safe conduct beyond our lines.

The indignation of the soldiers here, upon hearing of his release, we understand to be intense. What may follow we cannot conjecture, though we presume the military authorities will see him protected and transported beyond our lines, where he will be able to co operate with Johnson and Maynard.

The Missouri Swamp Fox.

Gibbons of the New Orleans Crescent gives the following sketch of Merriwether Jefferson Thompson, the Swamp Fox of Missouri. "The great Missouri swamp fox, the Marion of this revolution—you must know I mean Gen. M. Jeff. Thompson—was in town to day. I can not say he is in town: for, like the Hibernian flea, he seems to be here, there, and everywhere all at once. As he stepped leisurely over some barrels on the landing, I would not have known him but for the inevitable white handled bowie knife, which he carries as no other man carries a knife—stuck perpendicularly in his belt on the middle of his back; for he now wears a general regulation uniform, befitting a General. His old slouch white hat and feather, bob tail coat, short pants and rough boots, which made him look more like a cattle drover than a General, and in which he did his earlier deeds of daring, have been laid aside, and now he has really a military look. Let me picture this man to you. Imagine a tall, lean, lank, wiry-looking customer, at least six feet high and slender as a pair of tongs, a thin, long head, with a very long nose; what you would call a hatch et face; thick yellow hair, combed back off his ears and bobbed off short, displaying a very long thin neck; face healthy and ruddy, without a vestige of beard or moustache; some 20 or 25 years of age; light blue eyes with friendly and benevolent expression; placid, well shaped mouth, with a half smile always playing about the corners; a little stoop shouldered; slightly banded legged from much riding on horseback; easy and graceful in his movements, as well on foot as in the saddle; mild voiced and unassuming in a crowd; full of rough soldier language in his talk to all; his manner and tone of voice the same to all, from a Major General to a negro; imagine such a person as this, I say, and you will have a pretty correct idea of the famous Jeff. Thompson. He is about the last person you would take for Jeff. Thompson, after forming your idea from what you have heard of him. He is perpetually full of fun, he never gets to talking without setting all around him laughing, it is believed, indeed, that he fights chiefly for the fun of it. The camp is full of Jeff. Thompson's jokes, or rather the old dialogues he has had with friends and enemies.

Another chance of a Row with Great Britain.

The Rio Grande is a neutral stream, the boundary between Mexico and the Confederate States. This river, says the New Orleans Delta, has been blockaded by the United States navy, and is now closed to the commerce of the world. The ships of foreign nations bound for Matamoros and other Mexican ports are forbidden entrance into the river. The first vessel which was ordered off happened to be an English ship with a freight for an English house at Matamoros. No better illustration could be given of the forbearance or imbecility of the British government in relation to this blockade than would be their acquiescence in such an exclusion of their merchant vessels from the port of a nation not engaged in this war. They have already abundant proofs of the ineffectiveness of the blockade in regard to Confederate ports. Neither Great Britain, France nor the United States, ever before recognized or permitted such a blockade as that which the United States have attempted to maintain, or one more destructive to the interests of their people. But if they choose to submit to it, we do not know that it becomes us to object, whatever we may think of their consistency or manhood. But when the audacious government of Lincoln attempts to extend their blockade to the ports of other independent nations, it appears to us that there are no limits to the impudence and insolence of that government, or to the forbearance and submission of the great commercial powers of Europe.

A Book of Autographs.

Col. Bradford brought with him from Fort Warren, a book of autographs of his fellow prisoners, collected by James T. Lassell, one of the prisoners, and by him presented to the Colonel. It embraces 127 names. The first page contains the names of Messrs. Slidell and Mason and their Secretaries, McFarland and Eustis. The second those of Com. Barron, Col. Bradford, Col. Pegram (of Rich Mountain fame and Capt. now Lt. Col.) de Langel. The occupants of this page have decidedly the advantage of their predecessors,—and of their successors too, generally—in the bold fair style of their chirography. Afterwards follow Col. Martin, Maj. Andrews, and many others of the Hatteras prisoners, with Maryland Legislators, the Mayor of Baltimore, ex Minister Faulkner, ex-Governor Morehead of Kentucky Dr. Linsay of Greensboro' North Carolina, &c. &c.

Some of them have appended brief accounts of the manner of their arrest. The Police Commissioner of Baltimore had the honor of being "arrested on the 1st July 1861, at 3 o'clock in the morning by 400 armed men."

"Nothing in the history of this contest has been more remarkable than the secrecy which the Southreners have contrived to maintain with regard to their operations and their resources. At Washington itself it is not known whether the Confederate army is superior or inferior in numbers to the army under McClellan, still less whether it is the only force in the field, whether other divisions are in reserve. All we can discover is, that whenever the Federals make an advance no matter in what direction, they are infallibly confronted by a Confederate force which we are usually assured is superior in numbers."

The above is from the London Times. It is a high compliment to our rulers and people, and one which we are proud to believe is well deserved. The superior ability of our Administration, as well as the superior skill and bravery of our armies, will be more and more evident to intelligent lookers on, in proportion as they become acquainted with the facts and developments of this giant struggle. The opinion of the sage London Journalist which we have quoted, is the best answer that could be given to the few among us who imagine, and so represent, that failure to agree with their own peculiar ideas is evidence of incapacity.

Rich Examiner.

PLENTY OF POWDER.—Contrary to general expectation, we are glad to learn that the Confederate government has been able to make ample arrangements for a full supply of powder for the war. Majora Rins who has charge of the manufacture of powder for the government, and who is superintending the erection of powder mills at Augusta, Ga., says that the government has an ample supply of sulphur for that purpose for years.

Bishop Hughes in favor of the Confederate States.

The Staunton Va. Spectator learns that Archbishop Hughes has gone to Europe, not for the Government, but for the purpose of using his influence to secure the intercession of foreign power in behalf of peace and the recognition of the Confederate States.

VERY CRUZ.—This place, the key to Mexico, was taken by the Spanish troops on the 17th ult., without resistance from the Mexicans. The Mexicans had removed much of their munitions to a more defensible point. They will make a determined resistance, should the allied forces of Spain, England and France march upon the City of Mexico. A change in the administration is however looked for, and probably the difficulty will be settled without much fighting. The French fleet had arrived at Havana.

The flag of truce at Norfolk the other day brought from Old Point, a lot of blankets for the Yankee prisoners at New Orleans, directed as follows: "Prisoners, Rebel government, New Orleans." Gen. Huger very promptly returned them for a proper direction.

The Choctaw Indian nation which has already ten regiments in active service, has tendered another to the President, who has ordered it to report for active service in Floyd's brigade.